Availability of Mackerel colonies

1353. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether huge colonies of mackerel have been located in the Bay of Bengal off the Visakhapatnam coast;

(b) whether investigation has been carried out to identify reasons for abundant availability; and

(c) the action taken to export the excess catch of mackerel to foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Heavy landings of Indian mackerel by mechanized boats operating from Visakhapatnam fishing harbour has been reported during the months of January-April, 2003. The investigation showed that the concentrations were mainly found in the areas of Pudimadaka and Bhimunipatnam at a depth range of 40-50 mts. It has been reported that though the mackerel is an important fishery along the west coast of India, high incidence of shoals of this fish along the West Bengal, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh coast is not uncommon. The scientific investigations points to fluctuation in sea surface temperature, shortage of food in upper mixed layers and sinking of mixed layers during north-east monsoon as probable reasons for abundant availability of mackerel in this region.

(c) Due to the increased availability, the export of frozen mackerel has recorded almost four-fold increase from the port of Visakhapatnam, both in terms of quantity and value. Besides, a substantial quantity is being transported to the metropolitan cities in the neighbouring States in fresh/iced form. Curing and drying is also practiced for preservation and movement of excess catch to distant destinations.

KVKs in A.P.

1354. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: